

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T DUSHANBE 001966

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN, SA
NSC FOR MERKEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/8/2015
TAGS: [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [AJ](#) [PL](#) [RO](#) [TI](#)
SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN'S VIEWS OF US FORCE POSTURE (C-RE5-00249)

REF: STATE 220627 R SE 06-DEC-05

CLASSIFIED BY: RICHARD HOAGLAND, AMBASSADOR, DUSHANBE,
TAJIKISTAN, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (S) Post's DATT and DCM polled their colleagues informally on the questions below. The following answers should be seen as the Tajik government's current mood on these hypothetical questions. When and if negotiations were to start, outside pressures and local politics would influence the rhetoric, but we believe the core commitment to supporting a more robust U.S. presence in Tajikistan would remain. So far, no senior U.S. government official has directly raised the issue of U.S. basing in Tajikistan.

2. (S) A. DOES YOUR HOST GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT OF A US FACILITY IN-COUNTRY? WHY OR WHY NOT? HOW STEADFAST IS THEIR POSITION AND ARE THERE ANY SIGNS OF IT WAVERING? WHAT FACTORS (STRATEGIC, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC) WOULD INFLUENCE THEIR INTEREST IN A US MILITARY PRESENCE?

In 2001, President Rahmonov stated his strong support for U.S. basing in Tajikistan. Neither the President nor those close to him have stated since that they oppose U.S. basing here. Post believes that should President Rahmonov be asked by a senior U.S. official, he would likely pause and gauge Russian reaction, but would eventually support U.S. basing. Tajiks have expressed in private that foreign military basing in Tajikistan provides important economic assistance. Tajikistan remains a steadfast supporter of the United States in the global war on terror. President Rahmonov would probably be at greatest ease if any U.S. basing was under the context of the Global War on Terror or directly linked to operations in support of Afghanistan.

Our MFA contact emphasized that while Tajikistan as a small country must take into consideration the views of its neighbors, including big neighbors like Russia, the decision on basing would be a purely bilateral decision and not an issue for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or any other multilateral body.

3. (S) B. HOW VIABLE IS THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT? WOULD A SUCCESSOR REGIME HOLD A SIMILAR OR OPPOSITE POSITION?

Tajikistan is becoming the more stable regime in the region. President Rahmonov has reduced much of the opposition threat to his regime by sustaining modest economic growth, retaining general domestic security following the civil war, and jailing or threatening opposition leaders. While a successor regime in the near to mid-term is highly unlikely here, successor regimes could range from staunchly pro-Russian to Islamic. No successor regime is likely to be wholly anti-American, given the reservoir of goodwill from U.S. humanitarian and other assistance, and the recognition that the United States has improved Tajikistan and the region through its action in Afghanistan. Our MFA contact could not foresee a real change in power for the next 20-30 years, but he added, if there were a change, and if "the group in power is wise, they will certainly know to cooperate with Russia, China and the United States."

4. (S) C. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY RECENT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE CHANGES IN THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR US POLICY IN THE REGION?

During recent senior U.S. visits, President Rahmonov has remained consistent in his support for U.S. security priorities in the region. Rahmonov has specifically pointed out that the Global War on Terror continues and the United States should not reconsider its position in the region. Continued U.S. assistance projects including building a bridge between Tajikistan and Afghanistan have bolstered U.S.-Tajik relations. There was a dip in relations, according to the MFA interlocutor, after the color revolution in Bishkek. However, he believes that the attitude has changed now, adding that all countries in Central Asia, except Uzbekistan, have good relations with the United States. Any "negative attitudes" come from small groups.

5. (S) D. HOW MUCH FINANCIAL COMPENSATION WILL THE GOVERNMENT SEEK OR ACCEPT FOR US USE OF THE FACILITY? WHAT FEES (NATIONAL, LOCAL, OR PRIVATE) DO THEY PLAN ON IMPOSING FOR USE?

The Tajiks appear more limited in the level of pressure for funds exhibited toward foreign military tenants. The French military have stated they have little to no problems with the Tajiks in renegotiating their basing agreements. The French currently conduct C-160 operations out of Dushanbe airport in support of the French contribution to ISAF. However, the Tajiks will expect any significant military presence will bring with it significant infrastructure upgrades and additions. Post believes basing in Tajikistan would likely include compensation packages more amenable to the United States than currently underway elsewhere in Central Asia. The Tajiks would also welcome the employment and local procurement opportunities a base would represent.

18. (S) E. WHAT NON-FINANCIAL COMPENSATION OR QUID PRO QUO (SUCH AS POLICY CONCESSIONS) MIGHT THE HOST GOVERNMENT EXPECT IN RETURN FOR HOSTING U.S. BASES?

Our MFA contact did not foresee any policy concessions, but he did say Tajikistan would have to balance all of the big powers in the region, hinting that it might be Russia that pressures Tajikistan to seek concessions from the United States. In fact, we believe Russia would put enormous pressure on Tajikistan to ban basing or at least make the cost exorbitant.

19. (S) F. WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL DEMANDS THE COUNTRY WILL EXPECT TO BE FILLED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A US FACILITY? MILITARY, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC?

The government of Tajikistan will generally see a basing negotiation as an opportunity to raise Tajikistan's regional political importance, while adding to its economic potential. Increased military to military contacts, exchanges and programs would inevitably follow.

110. (S) G. DOES THE HOST COUNTRY SEEK A WRITTEN SECURITY COMMITMENT AS PART OF AN AGREEMENT FOR A US FACILITY?

Previous agreements, with the French for example, have been negotiated and then codified by an exchange of diplomatic notes, rather than an instrument needing ratification by the Parliament. In the case of a more complicated agreement, Parliamentary ratification could be needed, according to the MFA. The U.S. already has a basic SOFA with Tajikistan from the currently suspected OEF refueling operation.

111. (S) H. WHAT CONDITIONS DOES THE GOVERNMENT SEEK TO IMPOSE FOR THE FACILITY? WILL THE US HAVE EXCLUSIVE USE? DO THEY INTEND TO RESTRICT US DEPLOYMENTS FROM THE FACILITY OR COUNTRY? WILL DEPLOYMENT OF US FORCES BE SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT OR PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL?

Exclusive use would be subject to negotiation, but would likely be achievable.

112. (S) I. HOW WILL THE HOST COUNTRY PROPOSE TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR THE FACILITY?

Our MFA contact said that Tajikistan does have secure facilities, but any facility used by the United States would have to be improved. Tajikistan would expect major funding to come from the United States for security upgrades.

113. (S) J. WHAT OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE HOST-NATION GOVERNMENT (FOR EXAMPLE PARLIAMENT OR SECURITY COUNCIL) WILL PLAY A ROLE IN OR INFLUENCE NEGOTIATIONS OR POTENTIAL US DEPLOYMENTS?

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Security, Defense, and the Committee on Border Affairs would all play a role in decision-making and clearance of any U.S. proposal. The President's office would have the final decision.

114. (S) K. WHAT IS PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING HAVING A US FACILITY IN COUNTRY? WHAT ARE THE PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, OR MILITARY BENEFITS FROM A US PRESENCE? DOES PUBLIC OPINION DIFFER AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS (I.E., REGIONAL, ETHNIC, AGE, PROFESSIONAL)? WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INSIGHTS POSTS MIGHT OFFER TO THE REASON FOR THESE DIFFERENCES.

Our MFA contact did not see much public opposition, and opined that any dissent could be ameliorated by having hearings in Parliament, which he was confident would ultimately endorse U.S.

basing.

115. (S) L. ARE THERE ANY VIABLE OPPOSITION GROUPS THAT COULD BE EXPECTED TO CAPITALIZE ON A US PRESENCE AS LEVERAGE AGAINST THE CURRENT HOST GOVERNMENT? WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES FOR THIS OPPOSITION?

There are no well organized opposition groups that would oppose basing if the benefit to Tajikistan's national security and

economic interests are made clear. There would be a serious calculation made about the damage caused to Tajik-Russian relations, and that could be the most serious political and economic question.

16. (S) M. HOW CONCERNED IS THE HOST COUNTRY OVER SUCH OPPOSITION? IS THERE ANY CONCERN THAT A US PRESENCE COULD PRECIPITATE VIOLENCE OR TERRORISM?

Tajikistan is a stable country that is not easily fazed by events connected with the war on terror. Very unlikely a U.S. presence would precipitate violence.

17. (S) N. ANALYSTS WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION OR INSIGHTS POSTS HAVE INTO THE INFLUENCE OF THIRD COUNTRIES OR INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THIS ISSUE. SPECIFICALLY:

1) WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN BY THIRD PARTIES (SUCH AS RUSSIA, CHINA, IRAN OR THE EU) TO SUPPORT OR DISSUADE THE HOST GOVERNMENT FROM AGREEING TO HAVE US FACILITIES IN THE COUNTRY? ARE INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (SUCH AS THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION, COLLECTIVE TREATY SECURITY ORGANIZATION, AND BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION) BEING USED AS LEVERAGE?

Because there have been high-level visits to Tajikistan, including Secretaries Rice and Rumsfeld with no discussion of basing, neither Russia, China, nor Iran have conducted campaigns lobbying against a base. It has not been an issue. However, if negotiations were to become public and to take a long time, all three countries would likely wage an intense public and private battle to dissuade Tajikistan.

2) HOW SUSCEPTIBLE IS THE HOST COUNTRY TO THIRD PARTY INFLUENCE IN DECIDING WHETHER TO HOST A US FACILITY? ON WHETHER TO ALLOW USE OF THE FACILITY FOR DEPLOYMENTS?

Tajikistan's President is confident of his ability to balance the major powers. He would no doubt come to an independent decision, but we can not predict the inducements or pressures Russia and China would bring to bear.

3) HOW WOULD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A US FACILITY IN COUNTRY AFFECT ITS RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES?

A U.S. presence is problematic for Uzbekistan only, of the countries in Central Asia. There is little to lose in Tajik-Uzbek relations. Russia could make Tajikistan "pay" by restricting the flow of Tajik migrants to Russia and reducing Russia's economic investments in Tajikistan. Our MFA contact had an interesting anecdote. When Pakistan confronted the Tajiks with news that India was building a base in Tajikistan and said that the base meant Tajikistan "was against Pakistan," the Tajiks quickly countered that they had another military base that the Pakistanis were welcome to upgrade. The Tajiks have heard no further complaints from Pakistan.

18. (S) The Tajiks would be anxious to understand how beneficial a base would be in creating jobs, new businesses, and infrastructure for the country. There is no clear understanding now, according to our MFA contact, of the ramifications of a United States base.
HOAGLAND

NNNN